

A close-up photograph of a person's hands playing a snare drum. The drum is part of a larger marching band drum set, with other drums visible in the background. The person is wearing a dark uniform and black shoes. The background is a blurred green field, suggesting an outdoor parade setting.

TOP 12 THINGS TO INCLUDE IN PARADE SAFETY PLANS

A GUIDE FOR CITIES, COUNTIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Counties and municipalities are responsible for ensuring public safety at the many parades, festivals and special activities that may take place in their communities. To ensure these events are safe and enjoyable for all involved, many communities develop local ordinances and regulations to guide the preparation and execution of these events. This document highlights some of the critical elements to include in local ordinances or permitting regulations. The International City/County Management Association, the National Association of Counties and the National League of Cities encourage local leaders to use this list as a guide when developing regulations for parades and other events.

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1. REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

An online or physical “one stop shop” for city and county ordinances, permit applications, regulatory guidance, key contact information and related items can help citizens obtain all pertinent information for holding parades and special events, including details relating to permitting, volunteers, attendees, parking and safety.

2. KEY CONTACTS

It is important to develop a master list of local officials and county/municipal staff who will be involved in the event planning and permitting process, as well as key contacts with whom parade organizers should coordinate. These contacts should include, but not be limited to:

- City/county manager,
- Police and fire chiefs,
- Railroad officials (when crossing railroad tracks),
 - ▶ For information on how to contact railroad officials and other important contacts, visit the Federal Railroad Administration’s Railroad Contacts list at www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L03046
 - ▶ For additional resources related to safety measures concerning crossing highway-rail grade intersections, visit Operation Lifesaver’s website at www.oli.org
- State Department of Transportation officials (if state roads are involved), and
- Hospitals and emergency professionals.

3. WRITTEN SAFETY PLAN AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

A written safety plan is critical for addressing unexpected emergencies. This plan could, amongst other things, address risk mitigation and contingency planning; safety briefings for event participants and other stakeholders; driver and vehicle screening; safe float operation; and notification of railroads or other entities with control over potential hazards. Parade organizers should also consider developing plans for inclement weather and emergency/security response. All parade drivers and officials should have a copy of these plans, along with the names and contact information for key emergency parade and municipal personnel.

4. ROUTE

Route maps and emergency detour maps should clearly delineate street closures. Route planning should pay special attention to regulations around hospitals, schools and jails. Stationary performance zones should be identified and communicated to all participants. Parade organizers should develop and communicate a congestion management plan.

Parade organizers should notify residents and businesses along the parade route of the events and possible street closures affecting them well in advance.

5. VEHICLES

Local police officials can assist in determining a speed limit for parade vehicles and safety guidelines for types and sizes of vehicles allowed to haul floats and external passengers. Local regulations should address height and device guidelines for railings for external passengers on floats.

6. DRIVERS

Beyond the requisite driver's license needed to operate a moving vehicle, local police officials should provide additional guidance to determine minimum age and other safety requirements or training for drivers, especially those that are pulling the extra length and load of a large float.

7. PARTICIPANTS

Parade organizers should identify participants or performers within the parade, and what vehicles, uni/bicycles, large inflated balloons or animals will be used within each display ahead of time. Municipal officials should determine if chaperones are needed for participants under 18 or another age limit.

Municipal officials should determine if regulations are needed to address: alcohol consumption prior to and during participation in the parade; prohibited items including firearms and weapons; noise abatements; and throwing items such as candy from floats to viewers.

8. ANIMALS

If animals are included, officials should identify the species, quantity and health of the participating animals. Precautions should be taken within parade line-ups to ensure animals are well cared for, and are not startled by other participants or noises which could cause a public safety hazard. Parade organizers should also account for animal debris removal.

9. ASSEMBLY AND DISASSEMBLY

It is important to identify and communicate to all participants the sites and specified times for parking, loading and unloading parade vehicles. Parade organizers should notify residents and businesses near the parking and loading zones of these sites.

10. VIEWING STANDS AND VENDORS

Designated viewing areas are useful to direct pedestrian traffic. If viewing stands and platforms are necessary, municipal officials should determine safety standards of construction and breakdown to guide parade organizers. For street-side viewers, municipal officials should consider if regulations are needed on handheld signs or posters, or if setbacks or fence requirements are necessary.

If street vendors are allowed, any required permits and regulations should be communicated.

11. INSURANCE

Parade organizers should offer proof of insurance on vehicles and drivers participating in the parade. Municipal officials should determine if the organizations participating and coordinating the parade need to provide additional insurance.

12. DEBRIS REMOVAL

Parade planning procedures should incorporate debris clean up and removal of sanitary units.

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Along with municipal governance, ICMA, the National Association of Counties and the National League of Cities recommend ensuring audience safety through public communication channels such as the local media. Reminding the community of basic safety measures for children and adults—such as not running in front of or attempting to board floats—is important prior to any large community event.

These guidelines are based on currently used best practices throughout many cities and counties. For more information on the particular wording of ordinances or permit applications, check out the ICMA Knowledge Network at www.ICMA.org, NACo's County Innovations Network at www.CountyInnovation.us or NLC's City Solutions and Applied Research Team at www.nlc.org for sample ordinances for parades and special events and to discuss this with your peers. A model ordinance on parades and special events can be found on ICMA's Knowledge Network at: http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/306213/Example_Parade_Ordinance

For more information and to share your community's experiences in parade safety planning, please contact:

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,069 counties. For more information about NACo, visit www.NACo.org.

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) advances professional local government worldwide. The organization's mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional management to build better communities. For more information about ICMA, visit www.ICMA.org.

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns it represents. For more information about NLC, visit www.nlc.org.



Brockville Memorial Day Parade 2012 (Montgomery County, MD)
Photo Credit: (c) Shashi Bellamkonda, shashi.co, <https://lic.krpf/c7kXl/m>

